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KELLY
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the AMAZING SPIDER-MAN®

GRIM HUNT

PART 3

ALSO THIS ISSUE:

KAINE
BY DEMATTEIS, RIOS & FIUMARA

SPIDEY SUNDAYS
BY STAN LEE & MARCOS MARTIN

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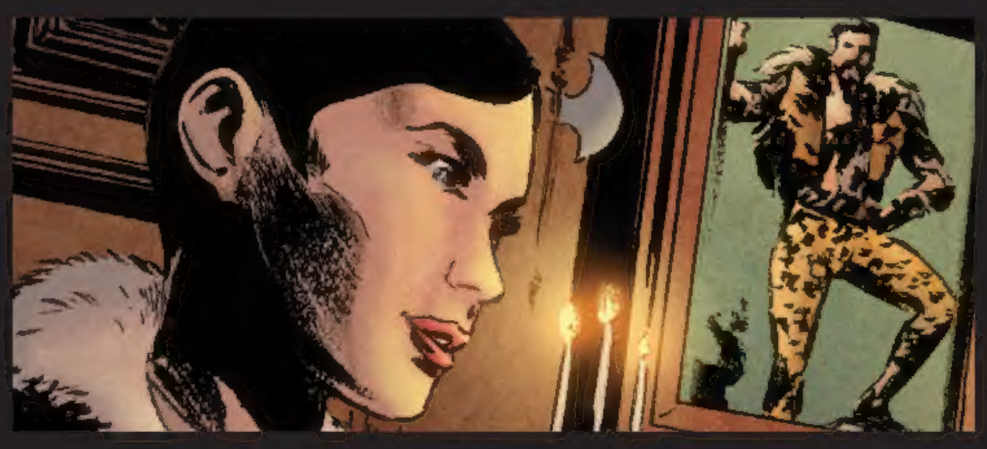
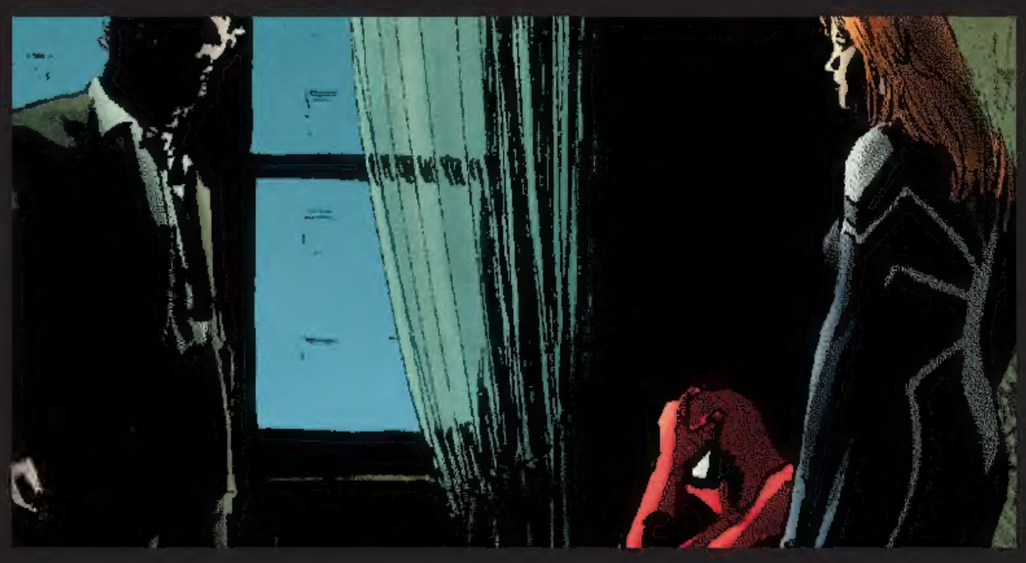
The Amazing Spider-Man

"It is necessary to have wished for death in order to know how good it is to live." ~ Alexandre Dumas

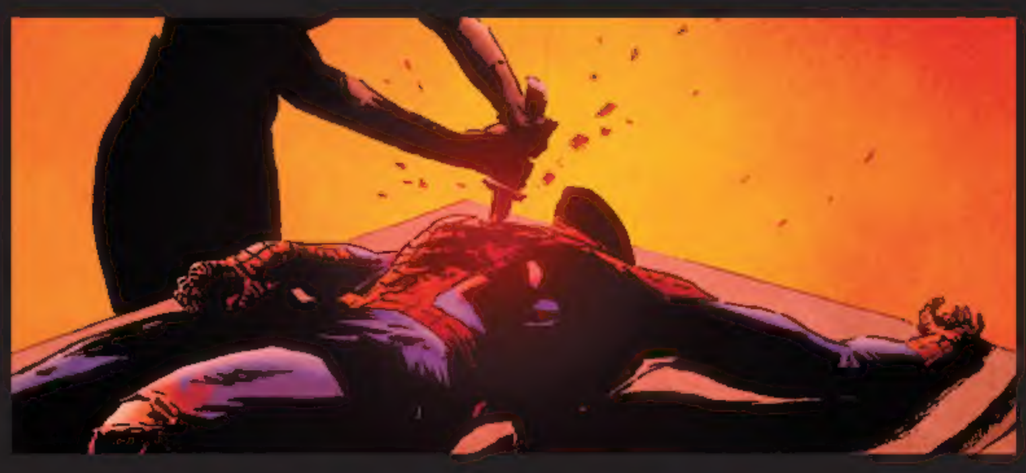


When Sasha Kravinoff, widow of the famed hunter Sergei Kravinoff, kidnapped the psychic known as Madame Web, it was the beginning of a hunt for any and all who wear the Spider-symbol. The Kravens next targeted Kaine, Spider-Man's renegade clone, and murdered Mattie Franklin, the former Spider-Woman.



Peter Parker, the Amazing Spider-Man, found Kaine near death on his doorstep, mumbling, "They're hunting Spiders." He later found Arachne (Julia Carpenter) locked in combat with Ana and Alyosha Kraven, Sergei's children. They fought off their attackers and retreated to Julia's apartment where they found Ezekiel, Spider-Man's spider-powered ex-mentor, previously assumed to be dead.

Ezekiel told them of a prophesized war between Hunters and Spiders. The Hunters have drawn first blood and are ruthlessly pursuing the Spiders. Arachne and Spider-Man found the Kravens tracking the young vigilante Araña. They were joned by Kaine, but ultimately were overpowered by the Kravens' coordinated assault — and Arachne and Araña were kidnapped.



Kaine tried to persuade Peter not to pursue the Kravens, but Peter and Ezekiel ignored his pleas. At the Kraven estate, the two confronted the family — only to discover Ezekiel was really the Chameleon, Kraven's half-brother, in disguise. With Spider-Man at their mercy, the Kravens hunted and killed him — using his blood to bring the original Kraven the Hunter back to life!

GRIM HUNT

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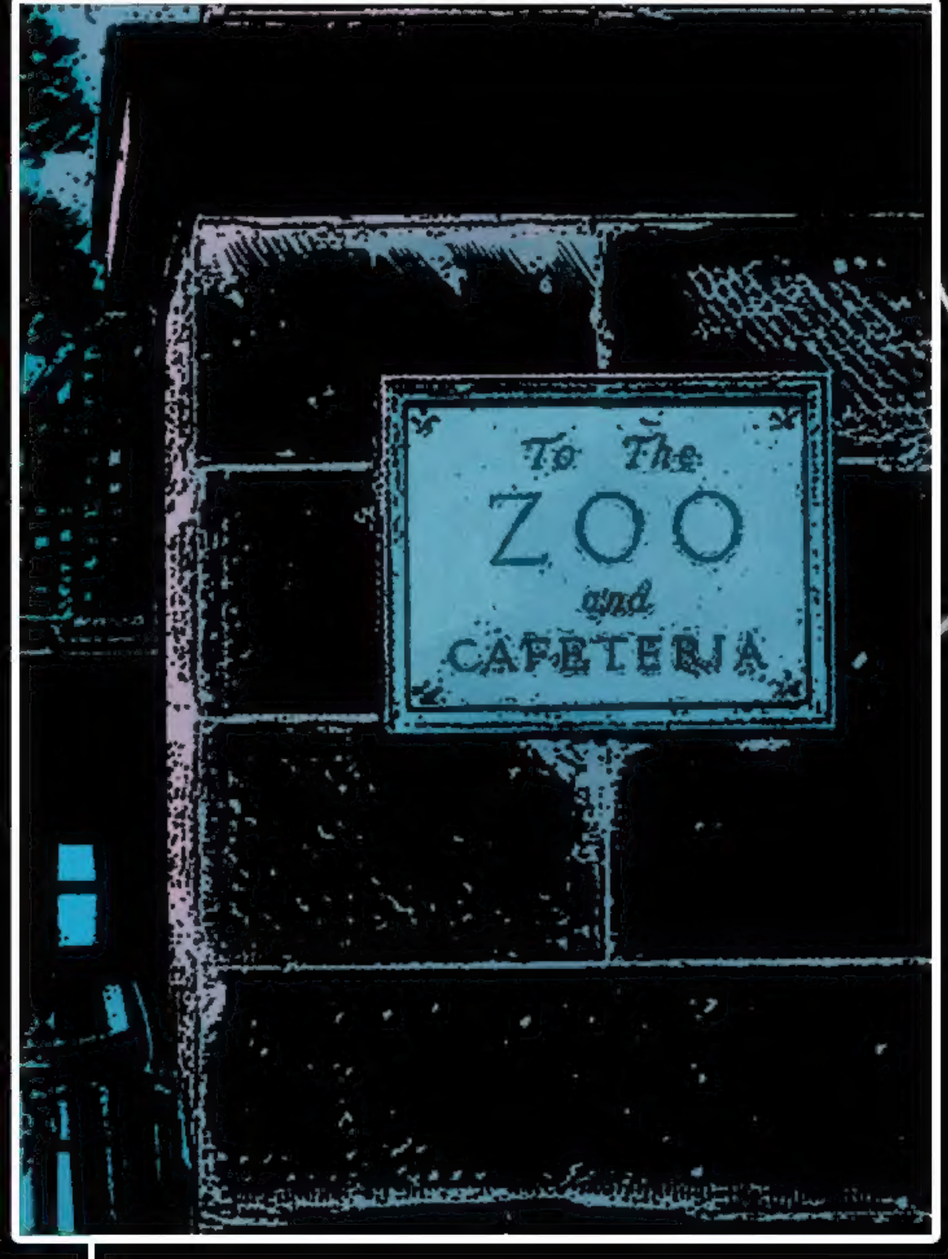
To The
ZOO
and
CAFETERIA

STAFFORD SAID IT WAS CRAZY LAST NIGHT. THE STORM OR SOMETHING...

ANIMALS DIDN'T SHUT UP ALL NIGHT. DON'T EVEN WANT TO GO NEAR THE GORILLA PADDOCK--
I DREW SHORT STRAW ON THAT LAST TIME--
KRNCHHH

WHAT THE HELL? IS IT, LIKE, SPIDER SEASON OR SOMETHING?
DO SPIDERS GET A SEASON? I DON'T... JEEZ...

LOOK AT THEM... EVERY-WHERE.
IS THAT SUPPOSED TO HAPPEN? DO THEY ALL JUST...DIE LIKE THAT?

THE HELL...DO I KNOW...
OH GOD.
"WHAT I HAVE DONE FOR YOU, BELOVED..."

...NOT SINCE ISIS AND OSIRIS HAS A WIFE SACRIFICED SO MUCH FOR HER HUSBAND...

...TO CHEAT DEATH ITSELF...

CALL STAFFORD--

SHHH. VERY. SLOWLY.

I PUT YOU TOGETHER AGAIN, MY LOVE. I MISSED YOU...SO DEARLY...

BUT NOT JUST ME. THE *WORLD* WAS... *WRONG* WITHOUT YOU.

"EVERYTHING HAS GROWN *FAT* AND *WEAK*... INSTITUTIONS AND INDIVIDUALS ALIKE..."

I NEEDED MY *HUSBAND*...

BUT THIS WORLD *CRIED OUT* FOR A *HUNTER*. THE *HERD* IS *WEAK*, BECAUSE NO ONE DARES TO THIN IT OUT.

"BUT NOW...

"THE BLOATED AND THE SICK AND THE *INFERIOR* WILL KNOW THEIR PLACE..."

GRAWRRRRR

THEY WILL BE HUNTED AND *CUT DOWN.*

THIS IS THE *LAW.* THIS IS *YOUR LAW* AND *OUR DESTINY* AS A *FAMILY.*

"THE KRAVINOFFS WERE GREAT ONCE.

"NO LONGER WILL WE HIDE IN SHADOWS. NO LONGER WILL WE BROKER DEALS WITH MONGRELS.

"OUR *PRIDE* IS RETURNED.

"MY *LOVE.*

"OUR *HUNTER.*"

THIS WORLD IS *FAT* AND *YOU* WILL LEAD US TO CONQUER IT...

BECAUSE THE ONE WHO KILLED YOU IS NO MORE.

"THE *WEB* IS BROKEN...

"THE *SPYDER* GAVE HIS *BLOOD* THAT THE *HUNTER* MAY LIVE AGAIN..."

AND NOW... KRAVEN IS REBORN.

IT IS TIME, SASHA--

the GRIM HUNT
chapter 3

JOE KELLY (w/ ZEB WELLS) script
MARCO CHECCHETTO art, pages 1-18
MICHAEL LARK & STEFANO GAUDIANO art, pgs 19-22

MATT HOLLINGSWORTH color art
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DAN BUCKLEY publisher / ALAN FINE exec. producer

GALE, KELLY, SLOTT, VAN LENTE, WAID, WELLS webheads
dedicated to J.M DEMATTEIS and MIKE ZECK

--SHOW ME MY "FAMILY."

THIS...THIS IS ALL BECAUSE WE HAVE A SPIDER STRAPPED TO OUR CHESTS?

NO, ARAÑA...

...THIS IS ALL BECAUSE OF *HER*.

THIS IS ALL BECAUSE OF *MADAME WEB*.

THEY KILLED HIM, JULIA. HE'S DEAD...

DON'T THINK ABOUT THAT...

SPIDER-MAN'S DEAD.

THE WEB HAS BEEN TORN...EVERY SPIDER HANGS BY A THREAD.

THE STRANDS MUST BE KNIT AGAIN...

CREEEAK

OR ALL IS LOST. ALL IS--

SNIFF

The Kravinoff Estate.

"AS YOU SLEPT IN YOUR GRAVE, WE ALLOWED OURSELVES NO REST..."

LOOK UPON YOUR FAMILY, HUSBAND. WE'VE GROWN *STRONG.*

WHA--

SNIFF SNIFF

WE ARE YOUR *FAMILY*, HUSBAND. THERE'S NO NEED TO--

IT IS *ME*, FATHER...

SNIFF SNIFF

TAKE MY SCENT.

ANA. YOU HAVE GROWN.

FATHER...

WE HAVE *ALL* GROWN, HUSBAND. GROWN STRONG THROUGH THE HUNT OF--

WHERE IS VLADIMIR?

SERGEI--

"WHERE IS HE?"

ARACHNE AND ARAÑA. SO LONG THEY HAVE IGNORED THEIR PLACE IN THE WEB... LIVING ON THE FRINGE, ALONE.

STOP!

S-STAY BACK!

THE WEB IS WEAKER FOR IT.

GONNA KILL-- HNNGH!

BUT IT IS NOT DESTROYED.

THESE SPIDERS HAVE THE POWER TO REBUILD IT.

NO!

...IT'S ALL RIGHT. IT'S GOING TO BE ALL RIGHT.

THEY ARE THE FUTURE.

GRRRRR!

VLADIMIR.
MY SON...
URK!
DOWN.
SNAP!
AWROOOOOO!
SERGEI...
DOWN!
CRACK
HE WAS THE *TEST SUBJECT*, SERGEI...TO SEE IF I COULD BRING YOU BACK.
HE HAS SERVED YOU WELL...DO WITH HIM AS YOU WILL.
YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHAT YOU'VE DONE HERE, SASHA.
NONE OF THIS IS RIGHT...

"...NONE OF IT."

...I JUST DON'T FEEL LIKE WE'VE EVER PROPERLY CLEARED THE AIR. AND NOW IT'S BEEN A WHILE SINCE I'VE EVEN HEARD FROM PETER, AND...

LOOK, MICHELE'S LEAVING TOWN FOR THE WEEK. IF YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY TO HIM, JUST HEAD OVER THERE AND SAY IT, MJ.

IT'S COMPLICATED, HARRY...

YOU THINK I DON'T KNOW FROM COMPLICATED?

MY DAD KNOCKED UP MY GIRLFRIEND. YOU THINK LILY AND I DIDN'T--

EEEEE

OH, GOD...

EEEEE

EEEEE

EEEEE

COME ON, WE'LL CROSS AT THE CORNER. IT'S JUST THE RAIN DRAWING THEM OUT...

NO, HARRY... THIS FEELS FAMILIAR.

SOMETHING'S WRONG.

THE WEB IS *LIFE*. IN BREAKING IT, THE KRAVINOFFS HAVE RATTLED ALL OF NATURE.

NORAH, ARE YOU SERIOUS? A MONKEY?

YEP. SMILE, CHIM-CHIM.

I'M TELLIN YA, MOM, BETWEEN THIS AND *LIZARDPALOOZA* LAST WEEK, I REALLY GOTTA GET OUT OF MANHATTAN.

BUT THE SPIDERS... THE SPIDERS FEEL THE VIBRATIONS MOST INTENSELY.

THEY WILL REACT ACCORDING TO THE TRUTH OF THEIR NATURE... BUT KNOW THIS: THERE *WILL* BE A REACTION.

THE KRAVINOFFS HAVE TORN A GREAT HOLE IN THE WEB.

BUT JUST AS NATURE ABHORS A VACUUM...

--SO DO THE SPIDERS.

ALYOSHA... YOU AGREE, RIGHT?

YES, UNCLE. FATHER'S REACTION WAS... *EXCESSIVE.*

HE SENSES WE WILL HAVE NEED OF THE WOMEN. IT IS NOT FOR US TO QUESTION HIM.

YOU'RE *SERIOUS?* I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO'S NOTICED THE "*GREAT HUNTER*" ISN'T ALL THERE?

I TOILED FOR YEARS TO ACHIEVE HIS RESURRECTION, YEARS IN WHICH MY HUSBAND KNEW ONLY THE BLACKNESS OF DEATH. HE WILL NEED TO ADJUST...

HAS ANYONE STOPPED TO CONSIDER THE FACT THAT THIS MAN *SHOT HIMSELF IN THE HEAD?*

HOW DO YOU KNOW HE *WANTED* TO COME BACK?

PAPA...?

YOU'RE UNHAPPY WITH US.

THIS...THIS WASN'T WHAT YOU WANTED.

SOMEHOW... WE HAVE DISAPPOINTED YOU.

PLEASE, TELL ME WHAT TO DO TO MAKE IT BETTER. PLEASE. I HAVE WAITED SO LONG FOR YOU, PAPA...I--

IT CAN'T BE LIKE THIS.

YOU DIDN'T COME ALL THIS WAY...FOR THIS.

RRRARGH!

FATHER, NO!

ANA, STOP!

SLICE

PAPA... I...

NEVER APOLOGIZE...

GOOD GIRL.

IDIOT!! WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?!

HE-- I--

HE WAS GOING TO KILL...

I DID AS I WAS TAUGHT...

I'LL KILL YOU, YOU LITTLE WITCH!

SERGEI! LET ME SEE! LET ME HELP.

PLEASE...

SERGEI?

PAPA?

TAKE THAT, MRS. KRAVEN.

WHAT THE HELL IS SHE SMILING ABOUT?

YOU IGNORANT SOW!!

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO ME?!

YOU HAVE GIVEN ME THE *UNLIFE*...THE ETERNAL CURSE!

+GAK!+

I...I FOLLOWED YOUR +CAK+ YOUR SPELLS...USED YOUR +WHEEZ+ SERUMS...

I...I SACRIFICED THE SPIDER...

SNIFF

I KNOW THIS PRETENDER.

THIS IS NOT *THE SPIDER.* YOU HAVE BEEN DECEIVED.

TH-THAT'S NOT TRUE, HUSBAND! IT'S HIM! IT'S--

KAINE! THE SPIDER'S SORT-OF BROTHER.

...HE WANTED TO DIE LIKE A REAL BOY.

SO THE CEREMONY WAS CORRUPTED.

SERGEI... PLEASE. I WILL FIX THIS.

NO...

...THIS IS NOT FOR *YOU* TO FIX.

GAH-HUNNNGH--

GAH-HLNNNGH--

OH GOD...

GOD... HELP ME...

NO...NOT GOD.

KAINE..?

NO...

...COMING... KRAVENS...WHAT ARE YOU--?

I'M DOIN' SOMETHING VERY VERY STUPID...

DON'T SCREW UP MY HERO MOMENT, PARKER.

KAINE!!

SMASH!

HUNT ME

HUNT ME
To Be Concluded!

AN UNTOLD TALE OF KRAVEN THE HUNTER

HUNTING THE HUNTER

PART THREE: WAR

DIDN'T SEE *THAT* COMING *KRAVEN* MOVED SO FAST... MORE LIKE AN ANIMAL THAN A MAN...WHIPPED OUT THAT DAMN *KNIFE* AND NOW--

NOW I'M AS GOOD AS *DEAD*

SHOULDN'T BE SURPRISED. THAT'S WHAT I SAW IN MY *VISION*: THE HUNTER...

STANDING OVER MY *BLOODY CORPSE*

J.M. DEMATTEIS WRITER | **EMMA RIOS with MAX FIUMARA** ARTISTS | **FABIO D'AURIA** COLORIST | **VC'S JOE CARAMAGNA** LETTERER | **TOM BRENNAN** ASST. EDITOR | **STEPHEN WACKER** EDITOR | **TOM BREVOORT** EXEC. EDITOR | **JOE QUESADA** EDITOR IN CHIEF | **DAN BUCKLEY** PUBLISHER | **ALAN FINE** EXEC. PRODUCER

GALE, KELLY, SLOTT, VAN LENTE, WAID & WELLS WEB-HEADS

CALL *DAMU* AND *DUMISA*. HAVE THEM GIVE THIS... *KAINE* A PROPER BURIAL.

YOU LOOK DISAPPOINTED, *SERGEI*.

IN A WAY, I *AM*. FOR A MOMENT THERE, I THOUGHT HE WAS--

WAS *WHAT?*

SOMETHING... *MORE*.

AFTER A LIFE AS HOLLOW...AS *WRETCHED*...AS MINE THERE'S NO REASON TO *RESIST* DEATH.

I *WELCOME* IT--WITH *OPEN ARMS*.

BUT IF SERGEI KRAVINOFF REALLY *IS* THE MAN WHO'S GOING TO TAKE ME OUT OF THIS WORLD...

...HE'S GOING TO HAVE TO PROVE IT

EARN IT

SSSSSSSSSSSS

BEING A DEFECTIVE CLONE HAS ITS UPSIDE. LIKE A TOUCH THAT CAN BURN FLESH

OR CAUTERIZE WOUNDS

KRAAK!

RUNNCH!

HURTS LIKE HELL BUT NOT HALF AS MUCH

...AS IT HURTS THEM

ALL RIGHT, JUNGLE JIM-- IT'S TIME FOR THE TWO OF US TO--

SSSSSSSSSSS

WHERE'D HE GO?

IT'S NOT WHERE HE WENT THAT MATTERS. IT'S WHERE YOU GO FROM HERE.

WHAT'RE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

I ASKED YOU EARLIER TO LEAVE HERE. THAT IS STILL THE WISEST COURSE.

I CAN FEEL IT...TO THE BOTTOM OF MY SOUL: THIS WILL NOT END WELL.

FOR YOUR OWN SAKE, KAINE...AND HIS... I IMPLORE YOU TO--

AAARRRRRROOOO--!

SOUNDS LIKE SOME KIND OF ANIMAL

...BUT I KNOW IT'S THE HUNTER CALLING ME OUT

RRRRRROOOO--!

...TO FACE THE TANTALIZING POSSIBILITY

DON'T GO.

...OF MY OWN EXTINCTION

HOW CAN I *NOT?*

AT FIRST I THOUGHT MWANGA WAS SOME PATHETIC *THROWBACK* TO THE DAYS OF THE "*GREAT WHITE HUNTERS*" AND THEIR LOYAL SPEAR-CARRIERS. BUT THERE'S MORE *TO* HIM THAN THAT.

HE'S A MAN OF *INTEGRITY*-- NOT SOMETHING I COME ACROSS VERY OFTEN. AND HIS FRIENDSHIP WITH KRAVINOFF...

...*SEEMS GENUINE*

THEY RESPECT EACH OTHER, *CARE* ABOUT EACH OTHER, SHARE A SIMPLE, HUMAN CONNECTION...

...*THAT I'VE NEVER KNOWN*

KAINE!

WHAT THE *HELL?!*

DO YOU *FEEL* IT, KAINE? THE JUNGLE... LIKE A FEVER... *INSIDE* YOU?

HOW'D HE *DO* THAT? GET *MY NAME* ON THAT *TOMBSTONE?*

THE *DRUMS* POUNDING... THE WARRIORS *CHANTING?*

WHEN I ARRIVED HERE, KRAVEN SAID HE KNEW I WAS *TRACKING* HIM. THAT HE'D BEEN *WAITING* FOR ME.

THERE WAS SOMETHING ON THE *TIP* OF THAT KNIFE... AN ANCIENT MIXTURE OF CERTAIN HERBS AND ROOTS.

MAYBE HE KNEW ABOUT THE *VISION*, TOO. MAYBE...HE REALLY *IS* THE ONE.

AND NOW THEY'RE *SWIMMING* THROUGH YOUR BLOODSTREAM... *FEEDING* ON YOUR BRAIN.

OR MAYBE--THAT POTION OF HIS IS JUST SCREWING WITH MY *HEAD*--AND THE INSCRIPTION ON THAT TOMBSTONE...

HERE LIES KAINE SLAIN BY THE HUNTER

...ISN'T EVEN *THERE*

NOT ENOUGH TO *CUT MY THROAT*--HUH, KRAVINOFF? YOU HAD T'*DRUG* ME, TOO?

MIGHT WORK ON A *NORMAL* MAN. BUT IN CASE YOU HAVEN'T NOTICED--

--I'M ANYTHING *BUT* NORMAL. AND CONSIDERING I WAS HATCHED IN A *TEST TUBE*... BORN FROM THE DNA OF A WALL-CRAWLING FREAK--

--IT'S A PRETTY *BIG STRETCH*--

ROWWWRRR

WHUMMP!

ROWWWRRR!

SHRIPPP

SNAKT!

WHUDD!

RAKKKK

SHRRIPPP

--MAYBE YOU'LL BE PROVED *RIGHT.*

--TO EVEN CALL ME A *MAN.*

YOU SAID BEFORE THAT YOU THOUGHT I WAS... *SOMETHING MORE.* TRUTH IS, I'VE ALWAYS THOUGHT OF MYSELF AS *SOMETHING LESS.*

BUT... *TONIGHT--*

I CAN FEEL KRAVEN'S POTION *BURNING* THROUGH MY BODY. HE THOUGHT IT WOULD CONFUSE ME. *WEAKEN* ME.

BUT I'VE BEEN BURNING MY *WHOLE LIFE.*

EVER SINCE I CRAWLED UP OUT OF *PROFESSOR WARREN'S* VATS, MY CELLS HAVE BEEN DYING SLOWLY *PAINFULLY.*

MY *EVERY BREATH* HAS BEEN *AGONY.*

SO WHAT'S A LITTLE *MORE?*

STILL, FOR ALL THE SUFFERING I'VE ENDURED, I NEVER HAD THE *COURAGE* TO TAKE MYSELF OUT.

OR MAYBE THERE'S A PART OF ME THAT'S JUST TOO DAMN STUBBORN-- TOO DAMN *STUPID*-- TO *GIVE UP.*

EITHER WAY, KRAVINOFF, I'M HOPING YOU'VE GOT WHAT IT TAKES TO PUT ME OUT OF MY *MISERY.* BUT HERE'S THE *THING:*

BEFORE YOU *DO...*

...I'M GOING TO FEED YOU SOME MISERY OF YOUR *OWN*

LOOK AT HIM ON HIS KNEES-- *WEEPING* LIKE A LITTLE GIRL

PROUD RUSSIAN NOBLEMAN?

GREAT WHITE HUNTER?

SERGEI KRAVINOFF'S A *PATHETIC JOKE*. HE'S

HE'S OUT OF HIS FREAKING MIND

I DRINK MWANGA'S BLOOD...AND, WITH IT, HIS ESSENCE, HIS *WISDOM*. AND I SEE NOW, I *KNOW* NOW...

...WHO IT IS I FACE.

LET'S DO THIS.

HOW CALM I FEEL; HOW *PEACEFUL.*

AS IF SOMETHING INSIDE ME--SOME KNOT, SOME TANGLE OF FEAR AND ANGER AND SO MUCH MORE...

...HAS FINALLY BEEN *UNTIED.*

ALL THESE YEARS: FLEEING RUSSIA, SUFFOCATING IN AMERICA, FINDING RELEASE...FINDING *HONOR*...IN THE JUNGLE.

ALL THESE YEARS--AND I'VE NEVER KNOWN PEACE OR CALM OR THAT ELUSIVE THING CALLED *HAPPINESS.*

BUT I FEEL AS IF I CAN KNOW IT NOW. THAT IT'S NEARBY. JUST OUTSIDE PERHAPS...

...HIDDEN IN THE PATTER OF THE RAIN, THE DRUMBEAT OF THE THUNDER.

PEACE, CALM, HAPPINESS.

AN *ENDING.*

SOON.

Next: Burning Bright

DESPITE HIS SPIDER-SENSE, SPIDEY IS SO EXCITED THAT HE DOESN'T NOTICE HE'S BEING FOLLOWED...

MR. FANTASTIC SOLVED MY PROBLEM!

NOW I CAN *FINISH* MY INVENTION!

AT LAST WE'LL FIND OUT WHO SPIDER-MAN REALLY *IS!*

DUH, WE AWREDDY KNOW! HE'S *SPIDER-MAN!*

I MEANT HIS *ALTER EGO*, YOU WALKING MORON!

HA HA! YOUR BAD! I AIN'T WALKIN'! I'M *SITTIN'!*

MY INVENTION'LL MAKE ME *FAMOUS!*

MAYBE THEY'LL DO A *MOVIE* OF MY LIFE.

STARRING ROBERT DOWNEY THE 3RD!

C'MON, C'MON! TAKE OFF YOUR *MASK!*

HE'S HEADIN' FOR THE BEDROOM.

IT'S TIME FOR *SPIDER-MAN* TO REVERT BACK TO WIMPY *PETER PARKER!*

I SHOULD'A BEEN AN *ACTOR*-- THE NEXT MARLON BRANDO!

BUT WITH MY LUCK, IF THEY EVER DO A SPIDER-MAN *MOVIE*--

--THEY'LL PROBABLY GET SOMEONE *ELSE* TO PLAY ME!

HE'S JUST A *KID*, YOU LAMEBRAIN!

HE'S SPIDER-MAN'S *SIDEKICK!*

LOOK! *PARKER* MUST BE *SPIDER-MAN!*

NOW TO COMPLETE MY INVENTION--

--WHICH WILL CHANGE THE *WORLD!*

BUT WHAT'S HE TRYIN' T'*DO*, BRAIN?

IT'S *OBVIOUS*, YOU JACKASS--

HE'S CREATING A *TIME MACHINE!*

WILL PETER'S INVENTION WORK? WHERE WILL IT TAKE HIM? WE CAN ONLY SAY--EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED!

The Amazing *Spider-Man*
Trade-mark ®

BY STAN LEE & [illegible] & MARCOS MARTIN

Colors By Muntsa Vicente

Letters By VC's Joe Caramagna

YOUR FRESH FRUIT
McIntosh's
Panasonix
AHOOY!

the AMAZING SPIDER-MAIL

TOM BRENNAN ASST. EDITOR
STEPHEN WACKER EDITOR
TOM BREVOORT EXECUTIVE EDITOR
JOE QUESADA EDITOR IN CHIEF
DAN BUCKLEY PUBLISHER
ALAN FINE EXEC. PRODUCER

It's early July and it is HOT! If you thought the first three parts of Grim Hunt were a wild ride, you ain't gonna believe what's in store for the extra-sized finale in one measly week. All told it's almost 50 pages of comics we're putting together for ya here at Spidey Sentral. So if you've got a long car trip with the parents coming up, this will be the comic to buy!

Now let's get to some mail on the recent Stern/Weeks/Spidey/Juggernaut 3-parter!

Dear Spider-Mail,

I'm a long-time fan (since the late 1970's) but this is my first time writing in, and I just wanted to let you know as long as you periodically have Roger Stern writing and Lee Weeks handling the penciling and inking on The Amazing Spider-Man comic (like ASM# 627), I'll be periodically picking up this comic!

Roger Stern's storylines are second to none, and the cast of characters (even the throwaway ones!) come to life as fully realized people under his care. Lee Weeks' artwork and storytelling is always a treat as well. It brings you right into the story from the get-go, and you forget that world he creates is an illusion until you find yourself on the last page craving more! Unfortunately, it seems we ALL TOO RARELY see these two GREAT talents working nowadays. And as shown in their recent work in The Amazing Spider-Man comic, they're both at the top of their game (and still ascending)!

John Redmon
Via e-mail

Dear Mr. Whacker & Co.,

I was all set to write in to let you know that I thought Amazing Spider-Man #627 was the best issue of Spidey I've read in years, when I stopped myself. I decided to wait and see how the 3-issue arc played out before I hocked a heapin' helpin' of hype on that single, measly issue.

Well, now I'm writing in to let you know that Amazing Spider-Man #'s 627-629 were ALL the best issues of Spidey I've read in years (and I've enjoyed almost every issue of the thrice-monthly new direction).

Holy cannoli! Each issue that Stern & Weeks churned out had it all! Fantastically fun plot! Incredible pacing! Poignant character moments! Cool character cameos! Tantalizing mystery! Eye-popping art! Spot on dialogue! In the midst of a stellar run on an already quality funny mag, these two industry veterans seemingly came out of left field to teach a three issue comic book course called Spidey 101, schoolin' all the younger creators on the ways of the Web-Head. THIS is how you do it!

More Stern. More Weeks. More magic. Keep 'em coming.

Dallan J. Baumgarten
Mesa, AZ

Thanks, Dallan. The kind words are great to hear and we all love the Stern/Weeks combo. On another note (and this goes for alla ya!), my name's in each issue of this book about 37 times because I'm so egocentric and about THREE of you each month manage to spell my name correctly. It's killin' my mon! Why do you do this to poor Mrs. Whacker? Oops.

Hello Spidey-team!

Just finished ASM 628 and I want to know what you have against strong guys. No, not Strong Guy from X-Factor (although that would be an interesting guest star), strong guys like Juggernaut and the Absorbing Man.

I realize that to establish a new player as a threat he needs to take out a big threat, and the easier the better. This was done for years on Dragonball Z. Yes, I'm comparing Captain Universe to Trunks coming down and destroying Frieza. But then ol' Web-Head repeatedly fools Captain Universe. All of the classic Spider-Man vs. Juggernaut stories are out the window. Then in the back up story, Spidey easily defeats the Absorbing Man. The guy took Hulk to the limit and Spider-man barely breaks a sweat.

I don't want this to read like I hate the books. I find ASM to be the most action packed and unpredictable book every month (or week as they case may be). But I just want to know... What do you have against big guys?

Kevin Hellions
Rome, NY

I usually turn any Dragonball Z questions over to writer Bob Gale since he's the biggest DBZ fan on the planet, but let me say we have nothing against strong guys. It's just that our heroes are usually either smart enough or wily enough to find a way to beat them. In general the drama in ongoing super hero comics isn't in IF they'll beat the bad guy, but in HOW they will do it.

I think I mentioned a few months back that I was lucky enough to go to Mantova, Italy, for their comic arts festival. It is a beautiful part of the world filled with skilled artisans, great food and absolutely crazy drivers!

While there I was reminded why editing Spider-Man is the 2nd Greatest Job in Comics (1st Greatest is working for me as an assistant editor, I would assume). The reaction to the character in Italy is mind-boggling. They love Spider-Man and while there I found out why. Turns out they've been reprinting Italian translations of the Spidey comics for 40 years...which is just a few years less than the character's been around. So at this point almost every issue has been seen by our Italian fans.

The stories are printed a few months after they run here in Amazing and one of the side effects of making Amazing a thrice monthly book was that it was much easier for the readers in Italy to follow Spidey's story. Since the Italian market didn't always get the other ongoing Spidey titles that previously existed, it meant they would often miss important chapters in Pete's life.

At the con, I was honored to meet my Italian counterpart, editor Max Brighel – who is responsible for correcting my myriad mistakes for an Italian audience—and I wanted to give him some space here for a little history lesson as a way of saying thanks to all of our Italian fans who have been following us for so long (and I'm sorry very-former Spidey editor Ralph Macchio made fun of all of you last issue).

Take it away, Max!

Dear Stephen,

Exactly 40 years ago, a small Italian publisher based in Milan, Editoriale Corno, reprinted for the first time "Amazing Fantasy" 15 in a magazine aptly named "L'Uomo Ragno" (i.e. "Spider-Man") which also included Dr. Strange.

Editoriale Corno folded in 1984, but Spider-Man soon came back first with the unlucky Labor Comics, then with Star Comics, another small publisher based this in Perugia. Star Comics launched in 1987 a new "L'Uomo Ragno" with issue 1, then Marvel Italia (soon to be Panini Comics) took over the publishing of this biweekly title with issue #141 in 1994.

Finally, in 2008, we changed the title of the magazine to "Spider-Man" with issue #489 (and the beginning of Brand New Day). Now, it's 531 issues old (and tomorrow will be 532!).

Well, time to go back to work. All the best.

Max Brighel
editor of "Spider-Man"

Thanks, Max. As my Italian counterpart I hope you are giving the Italian version of Tom Brennan plenty of grief in your own letter column. If he's anything like my Brennan, I'm sure he deserves it.

And congratulations on reaching 40 years...I feel like I've done 40 years of Spidey comics myself in the past couple months. Ciao!

SPIDEY NEWS!

ITEM! St. Louis Cardinal fans --like myself-- were stunned by a shout out to recent Spidey comics from the St. Louis Post-Dispatch in their "10@10" blog by sports writer Derrick Goold. Specifically, he liked that I said "Viva Pujols" at the end of a recent column. Yes, citizens, I was as stunned as you are that somebody's reading this stuff.

ITEM! Big-time Spidey related announcements coming in this year's San Diego Comic Convention. Be sure and check out Marvel.com the week of July 22-25th. Tom Brennan will be at the Con too, which means I'll be left here in the office alone trying to figure out how to turn this computer on...and come to think of it...where are my pants? BRENNAN!!!

ITEM! If you have some extra dough, make sure and check out Marvel's new street-level epic: Shadowland. It features Spidey and a whole crew of heroes going up against the Marvel Universe's newest villain...Daredevil.

Spidey's a big player in the series and later in the summer the webslinger is featured his own Shadowland special guest-starring Shang Chi-Master of Kung Fu. That'll be by Dan Slott and Paulo Siqueira...two Spidey creators you folks seem to love around here.

That's all the room we got. See ya in 7 days for the end of Grim Hunt...lotsa Spidey friends probably ain't making it out of this one.

**Viva Jona!
Simperin' Steve
6/18/10 – LATE!**

This issue's covers by Mike Fyles and Esad Ribic (YEAH!)

NEXT!

DEAD MAN HUNTING

Send e-mail to
SPIDEYOFFICE@MARVEL.COM
(please mark as OKAY TO PRINT)